

Living with Television Commercials:Media Cultural Literacy and Symbolic Consumption in Meaning-Construction(日常生活のなかのテレビコ マーシャル:意味構築活動におけるメディア文化リ テラシーとシンボル消費)

著者	Azrina Husin
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氏 名 (本 籍)	アズリナ フーシン Azrina Husin	(マレーシア)
学 位 の 種 類	博 士 (情報科学)	
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論 文 審 査 委 員	(主 査) 東北大学教授 添 谷 育 志 東北大学教授 阿 部 四 郎 東北大学教授 関 本 英太郎 東北大学助教授 小 林 一 穂 東北大学助教授 徳 川 直 人 東北大学助教授 タッド ホールデン	

論 文 内 容 要 旨

INTRODUCTION

The study looks at how people construct meanings using television commercials. It arose out of dissatisfaction with textual analysis of television commercials and market research. The former body of work reveals that commercials promote social and cultural values of the society they serve and also certain social properties such as body and gender in certain ways. On the other hand, the latter sees commercials as a marketing tool and seeks to uncover the effects commercials have on one's purchasing decision, interests and lifestyles. However, both fail to look at commercials from the eyes of the audience. The aim of this study is to achieve a better understanding on the relationship between television commercials and audiences by grounding the study into the lives of common people.

To do so, it draws on insights developed by the British cultural studies. I see the audience as active meaning-makers, not only of commercials, but also of their social environment. They are consumers of signs. They construct meanings and they appropriate parts of commercials in their daily lives. From media studies, I see the

world of the audience as highly mediated and that media direct and guide the way the audience see their world, and at the same time, respond to the needs and demands of the audience.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is qualitative in nature, another insight borrowed from cultural studies. Unlike quantitative research, this approach enables the researcher to get into the people's taken-for-granted world seen through and "from the subject's own frame of reference. Twelve people made up the sample and in-depth interviews were carried out. The study was based in Sendai, Miyagi. It began in February 1998 and ended in May 1999. The interviews were divided into three rounds.

The Respondents

The respondents were recruited using a modification of the convenience sampling. A pool of 40 names was introduced through 12 'mediators'. Out of this number, 35 people sat for the first round interviews and from this, 12 remained throughout the research. The drop in number was largely due to the way they were selected as this study was designed to include a small number of people.

The respondents were divided equally between male and female. The men were either self-employed or students. The women included full-time housewives, working women and also students. They included eight married individuals and six single people. Married individuals include a mixture of those with small and grown-up children, and also those without any children. Single people include those who lived with their families and those who lived on their own. The sample covered a wide age-range from 19 to 68. It is also made up of people with high education level. All finished high school, some completed or are in the process of completing university and college education. The respondents have access to two public broadcastings (NHK Kyoiku and NHK Sogo) and four other private network broadcastings (TBC, OX, MMT and KHB). Only four of them, all older and married individuals, have access to satellite and cable television.

The respondents were divided into three groups regarding their interest and attention to commercials. By coincidence rather than choice, each group consists of four respondents. The high interest group is made up of younger respondents. They usually described themselves as liking or paying attention to commercials during the course of the interviews. The medium interest group consist mainly of housewives who have easy access to television. The low interest group is made up of older respondents and repeatedly referred commercials as nuisance in the course of the interviews.

The Interviews

In order to have the panelists relate their experiences with television commercials, the interviews were done in a "conversational style", guided by a set of standard questions. The interviews were divided into three rounds, each covering essential areas. Besides being preludes to the last round of interviews, the first and second rounds covered areas such as the respondents' background and lifestyles, attention to and use of media and also their views and opinions about television commercials. These interviews also allowed me to sample with possible respondents before settling with the final 12 people. The third round interviews are at the heart of the study. Here a set of four standard commercials were shown and from which respondents constructed meanings.

The Four Commercials

The four commercials used in the study are Acom (Galaxy Cup), Pokka Crystal Black (going down the manhole), Nippon Ham (Ryu Raita and Kubota Toshinobu as father and son) and Cup Noodle (True Love). These commercials were chosen using a set of criteria built as the research gained momentum. The criteria included choosing commercials with famous people, commercials for product within purchasing limit, commercials that have been aired long enough for the respondents to have a sense of familiarity with it, commercials with low and high degree of product information, and commercials that adopt certain forms (e.g. mini dramas, post-modern, series).

FINDINGS

This study divided meaning-construction into two parts. First, it occurs at the time when an audience encounters a commercial text. Second, an audience constructs meanings when s/he integrates parts of a commercial into his/her lives.

Encounter with Commercial Texts

When my respondents watched the four commercials, they turned to four resources (strategies or tools that people use) for them to construct meanings from these commercials. The resources are, one, the immediate signs within the framework of the commercial text; two, his/her personal experiences; three, his/her identity, and four, information that one has about a sign in the commercial text gained from other media.

When an audience uses the first resource, s/he does not deviate from the immediate context and the meanings constructed are usually basic. Resource two allows one to bring his/her personal experiences to the text. The meanings constructed are usually unique and subjective. One also ignores the narrative and

other signs that s/he sees as less significant to his/her lives.

A commercial is a mixture of competing discourses. There is the discourse about the product, and the person appearing in it, as well as social and cultural values. An audience usually finds a discourse and positions oneself in an identity that best fits the discourse.

The media provide a rich resources for one to construct meanings from commercials. This resource, however, is used by the respondents who have a high access of the media (television, radio, magazines etc.) and is less obvious among those with less attention to the media. When one recognizes the signs for what it was supposed to mean in the commercial, then one constructs meaning that is full and correlates to that of the commercial makers.

Commercials in Daily Lives

The respondents are highly selective in their choice of what commercials to use, which parts of a commercial to use and how to use them. When one encounters a commercial text, s/he is also screening possible commercials to be used later in daily lives. Those chosen are put inside one's "stock of knowledge" before putting it to use when the appropriate situation comes. The ways commercials are used can be categorized into the following. One, by giving parts of a commercial an added meaning that is relevant to the situation which it was applied in and also to the identity of the user. Two, commercials serve as points of reference when the young respondents in the sample talked to their friends, usually about idols and popular songs.

Three, commercials have also been reproduced in plays and also as part of the respondents' interaction with their friends. And finally, although the respondents may not buy the product advertised in commercials, they do consume the products as signs when they discuss them with their friends.

CONCLUSION

Television commercials are not mere marketing tools. People realize that, but commercials are seen more as a form of easy and short entertainment. In terms of its relationship with the audience, commercials are best seen as a site where people negotiate meanings between those encoded and preferred by the commercials makers and their own ideas and beliefs about the products and the signs they see in the text. People switch positions, moving from the domain of preferred reading to oppositional and to a negotiated reading of the text.

People are consumers of signs, and in this study, I have broadened the term

consumption to go beyond mere purchasing of goods. In a society where people are flooded with signs and images, they use and consume these signs in their symbolic universe to construct meanings from commercials. Similarly, they consume signs from commercials in making sense of their lives.

While much has been said about the power of the audience in bringing different interpretations to a text, this study points to a rather unified and closed interpretations, both when they encounter commercials, and when they put the commercials in their lives. This, I argue, is because the pervasiveness of media culture in Japan directs and shapes the way the audience see a commercial, that a certain degree of literacy has been achieved by the audience. Media culture provides the base for the audience to turn to when they make sense of their world which include television commercials.

論文審査の結果の要旨

現代社会においてテレビコマーシャルは日常生活の一部となっている。人びとはそれを通じて商品やサービスに関する情報を得るだけではない。そこに登場するキャラクターを日常会話の話題としたり、そこで使用された音楽が思いがけないヒット曲になることもある。こうした現象の背後には、発信されたメッセージをただ受動的に受け入れるのではなく、能動的に「意味構築活動」を行う読み手としての消費者の存在が想定できる。本研究は、マス・コミュニケーション過程における受け手の能動的関与を重視するカルチュラル・スタディーズの考え方をテレビコマーシャルとその視聴者との関係の分析に応用したもので、全編8章よりなる。

序論は、本研究の背景、基本的諸概念の整理、及び本研究の目的と全体的構成を述べている。

第1章は、広告産業の発達に関する歴史的概観及び日本における広告産業の現状とテレビコマーシャルの種類の紹介、広告産業がターゲットとしてきた消費者の位置づけに関する従来理論の検討である。

第2章は、リサーチ・デザインの詳論である。本研究は、筆者が選択した4編のテレビコマーシャルに関する12人のパネリストへのインタビューから得られたデータに基づいている。本章では、40人のパネリスト候補者から12人の最終パネリストへと絞り込んでいく手続きと、三段階にわたるインタビューの設計について述べられている。この調査手法は筆者が独自に開発したもので、他の研究への応用が期待できる。

第3章は、パネリストのデモグラフィックな属性に関する質問（第一段階）とメディア文化全般に関する質問（第二段階）から得られた知見の総括であり、テレビコマーシャルを含むメディア文化への関心の程度（高・中・低）に応じてパネリストが3グループに分けられるとしている。

第4章は、第三段階のインタビューに際して提示された4編のコマーシャル（アコム、ポッカ、ニッポンハム、ニッシン）の選択基準の明確化とテキスト分析である。

第5章は、前章で詳述された4編のコマーシャルに対するパネリストの応答結果についての分析と議論である。ここで筆者は、パネリストがコマーシャル・テキストを読み解く際に、①コマーシャル・テキストに内在する記号そのもの、②個人的経験、③自己のアイデンティティ、④テレビ以外の多様なメディアからの情報、という四種類のリソースを複合的に用いていることを明らかにしている。この知見から筆者は、読み手の階級帰属によって支配的／妥協的／対抗的解読コードの採用が決定されるとするスチュアート・ホルのモデルの単純さを批判する。この点は、従来のカルチュラル・スタディーズが依拠してきたエンコーディング／デコーディング・モデルに見直しを迫る重要な成果である。

第6章は、テレビ・コマーシャルを視聴するという場面から離れて、パネリストが日常生活のなかでコマーシャル・テキストをシンボルとしてどのように消費しているかについての分析と議論である。4編のコマーシャルのなかでそのような消費頻度が最も高いのはアコムの「地球に寄ってく」というキャッチフレーズであり、あるパネリストはそれを「キャッシュ・ディスペンサーからお金を引き出す」こと一般と同義に用いている。同様な事例は、第3章で「高関心」グループに分類された他のパネリストにも見られ、本来の文脈外でのコマーシャル・テキストの利用が「メディア文化リテラシー」に依存することを示唆する重要な発見として評価できる。

第7章は、総括と結論である。

以上要するに本論文は、カルチュラル・スタディーズとメディア研究の成果を十分に踏まえながら、視聴者によるテキスト解読の局面と日常生活におけるシンボル消費の局面とを結びつけ、情報環境との相互作用の中に視聴者を位置づける斬新な視点を提示する貴重な成果であり、情報科学の発展に寄与するところが少なくない。

よって、本論文は博士（情報科学）の学位論文として合格と認める。